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Title:

Press statement: First Leasing Art Exhibition

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PRESS STATEMENT: 18/11/70.

FROM: THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN)

SUBJECT: FIRST LEASING ART EXHIBITION.

"The South Australian Art Gallery must receive financial help from the public as well as from the Government if it is to maintain its position as one of Australia's three most important Art Galleries", the Premier (Mr. Dunstan) said today.

Mr. Dunstan was speaking at the opening of the First Leasing Art Exhibition at the Gallery.

He said that it was essential for both private individuals and public enterprises to give support to the strengthening of the Art Gallery's collection if the Gallery was to be effectively the focus of the community's plastic and graphic art activities and appreciation.

"Responsibility for the Art Gallery should not be seen as entirely the Government's, though any government in South Australia would be very foolish to ignore what is, in fact, one of the city's most valuable artistic assets."

"It was because of this that Cabinet decided to increase its annual grant for purchases of works of art from \$5,000 p.a., as it was until 1970, to \$50,000 p.a."

"In deciding this Cabinet noted that between 1900 and 1970 the total income available and spent from Trust Funds and Government grants for Gallery purchases of works of art had been only \$400,000."

"The new annual grant of \$50,000 is, thus, one-eighth of the total amount spent between 1900 and 1970, combining both Government assistance and income from trust funds."

Mr. Dunstan said that the advent of the First Leasing Art Prize indicated again the growing awareness on the part of major Australian companies of the strength, variety and uniqueness of Australian artists.

"The Australian School' is now accepted internationally as being both vital and important", he said.

"First Leasing is a pioneer in Australian specialist lease financing, and it is one of the companies which has been prepared

to encourage the development of Australian graphic and plastic arts in a real and meaningful way."

"By providing \$9,000 in prize money for its art awards, by arranging for the purchase by the First National Bank of Boston of paintings entered in the competition, and by touring its exhibition extensively throughout Australia, the company is providing further effective incentive and stimulus to our artists".

Mr. Dunstan said that one of the most pleasing aspects of the scheme's support for Australian artists was the way prize winners had an opportunity to sell one or more paintings to the sponsors.

"This means that in addition to receiving prize money artists will receive the purchase price of their work."

Mr. Dunstan said that with the completion of the new sculpture court and with the housing of its historical collection in the restored old Archives Building, the South Australian Gallery will be an attractive, compact and efficient display center for an expanding collection.

"These developments will fit very neatly into the Government's overall plan for making Adelaide a Festival City with a level of cultural activity of which its citizens can be justifiably proud."

"One would also like to see a situation in which the performing, graphic and plastic arts in Adelaide bring people into the State as tourists, not only at Festival time, but between festivals at those times which tend at the moment to be rather like prolonged fasts between bi-ennial feasts."
